

FINAL DECISION DOCUMENTATION and DECISION RATIONALE

Pine Rock Timber Sale Harvest and Riparian Enhancement Project

Environmental Assessment Number OR080-99-04

Tract No. 2002-502

USDI - Bureau of Land Management
Oregon State Office, Salem District, Cascades Resource Area

Sections 8, 9, 10 and 11; Township 7 South, Range 3 East; Willamette Meridian

Clackamas County, Oregon

I. BACKGROUND

In 1999 and 2000 an interdisciplinary team (IDT) analyzed approximately 355 acres managed by the Cascades Resource Area, Salem District of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) for a timber harvest proposal. These stands analyzed are located within the Molalla Watershed. An environmental analysis was conducted and documented in the Pine Rock Timber Harvest and Riparian Restoration Plan Environmental Assessment (EA) Number OR080-99-04. The EA documented four action alternatives and one no-action alternative. The preferred alternative was a thinning proposal with road construction. The other alternatives included another thinning alternative proposal with less road construction and more aerial logging and two alternative proposals to regeneration cut harvest approximately 141 acres within the GFMA (Matrix) Land Use Allocation (LUA). All action alternatives included thinning approximately 16 acres in Riparian Reserves in conjunction with the timber sale along with topping trees to create snag habitat in the uplands and Riparian Reserve, felling trees to create Class 1 coarse woody debris (CWD) in the uplands and Riparian Reserve, and felling trees to create stream channel structure. Semi-permanent and temporary road construction, road renovation, stormproofing, blocking, and road decommissioning were also part of the proposal. A Finding of No Significant Impact was signed on May 26, 1999 and the EA and FONSI were made available for public review on May 27, 1999.

Since the release of the EA, the IDT has identified the need to update some information after further field reconnaissance. These changes to the proposed action are described in the following section that also describes any changes to the analysis and determination of effects as presented in the May 26, 1999 EA.

II. MODIFICATIONS TO THE PROPOSED ACTION / CHANGES TO AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

1. Changes to the Proposed Action

- a. *Unit acres* - Unit acres have been finalized based on unit traverse and sale layout. **Table 1** shows the changes in unit numbers and acres.

Table 1: Changes in Unit Numbers and Acres					
Unit Numbers		Harvest Method	Acres		
Contract	EA		Contract	EA	Change
1	9-A	Partial Cut - Commercial Thinning	39	54	-15
2	9-G 9-H 9-J 10-H	Partial Cut - Commercial Thinning	68	33 10 6 25	-6
6	9-C	Partial Cut - Commercial Thinning	11	14	-3
7	9-D 9-L 9-K 9-N RR-8	Partial Cut - Commercial Thinning	100 3	62 17 23 6 16	-21
11	9-I	Partial Cut - Commercial Thinning	7	10	-3
12	10-F	Partial Cut - Commercial Thinning	9	10	-1
13	10-G 10-E	Partial Cut - Commercial Thinning	40	13 21	+6 ¹
14	10-C	Partial Cut - Commercial Thinning	8	11	-3
15	10-A	Partial Cut - Commercial Thinning	5	6	-1
16	10-D	Partial Cut - Commercial Thinning	9	11	-2
Total			299	348	-43

- b. *Timber volume* - Final timber volume estimates for the sale have been determined through a field timber cruise. The Cruised volume is 5567 thousand board feet (MBF), an increase of 134 MBF over estimates made for the EA. Appendix A shows unit volumes.

¹ This change is due to the actual ground layout of the units whereas the EA map was an estimate.

- c. *Logging Systems* - Ground based logging decreased from 96 acres estimated in the EA to 89 acres in the contract. Cable yarding decreased from 162 acres estimated in the EA to 131 acres in the contract. Helicopter yarding increased from 81 acres in the EA to 88 acres in the contract. In addition, 16 acres of potential log removal from the Riparian Reserve were estimated in the EA without specifying logging methods. This was reduced to 3 acres in the contract. There are also 5 acres in unit 2 to be yarded with winching equipment from the road in the contract.
- d. *Road Construction/Renovation* - New road construction was estimated at 7000 feet in the EA and the contract includes 7057 feet. These are temporary or semi-permanent roads that will be decommissioned after yarding or sale termination. Three spur roads will be decommissioned at the end of the yarding operations, while two spurs will be left until after the underburning occurs and then decommissioned. No specific estimates of road maintenance and renovation needs were made in the EA. The contract includes: renovation of the Pinecrest Road for 5.23 miles with blading and roadside brushing and including upgrading 11 culverts and installing 1 new culvert, spot rocking up to 500 yards of gravel, and resurfacing 2.1 miles. These may be adjusted slightly during contract operations as changing needs become apparent. Culvert upgrades will be performed according to all best management practices to minimize diversion of natural hydrologic flow paths, reduce sediment delivery, protect fish and wildlife, and accommodate 100 year flood.
- e. *Road Decommissioning and Stormproofing* - Road decommissioning was estimated at 7400 feet in the EA. This will now include the 7057 feet of new construction that will occur at the end of the yarding and/or sale contract. The additional 400 feet of road to be decommissioned at the end of the 7-3E-8 road will be accomplished with other funding such as Jobs-In-The Woods (JITW) after the timber sale project is completed. Stormproofing of 3.4 miles was estimated under Alternative A. Stormproofing the 07-03E-16.1 and 07-03E-17.4 roads (.71 miles) will occur at the end of the sale while the road system 07-03E-15 will be stormproofed under a future project since it is not within the contract area.

2. Changes to the Project Design Features/Mitigation Measures

- a. *Vegetation* – Falling and yarding would not be allowed between April 1 and July 1 while the EA stated May 1 and July 1. This is to reduce the incidence of bark slippage and resultant stand damage. All down coarse woody debris would be contractually reserved.
- b. *Reserve Trees* - Nine seed trees (Plus Trees) are reserved in the contract; the number was not identified in EA.

- c. *Riparian and Botanical Reserves*- Falling away from reserves would be required and any trees felled into a reserve would be left and bucked at the reserve boundary. Yarding over streams would be restricted to maintaining existing canopy with no disturbance of the streamside canopy.
- d. *Road Decommissioning* – The BLM would supply native seeds to be used on roads as they are decommissioned.
- e. *Wildlife/botany*
 - i) *Ulotia megalospora*, which was found to be widespread in the riparian reserves and other withdrawn areas of the timber sale, has been removed from Survey and Manage Protection (FEIS January 2001).
 - ii) General surveys for Survey & Manage fungi were conducted in the sale area during the spring and fall of 2000 according to protocol defined in the *Handbook to Strategy 1 Fungal species in the Northwest Forest Plan PNW-GTR-476*, October 1999.
 - iii) Survey and Manage Fungi sites located within the sale area were *Helvella maculata*, *Otidea leporina*, *Otidea smithii*, *Ramaria araiospora*, *Sarcosoma mexicanum*, *Sowerbyella rhenana*.
 - iv) *Sarcosoma mexicanum* has been removed from Management Requirements in the Oregon Coast Range and Oregon Willamette Valley provinces. *Otidea onotica* has been placed in Category F and has been recommended for removal from Survey and Manage Categories. No mitigation or adjustments are required for the above two species.
 - v) All of the other fungi species have been placed in Survey and Manage Category B. Two sites of *Helvella maculata* and one site of *Otidea leporina* were found within existing riparian reserves and will be protected by those buffers. The remainder of the sites have been buffered (a no-entry buffer) with consideration for a number of ecological variables including, aspect, slope, canopy closure, herbaceous ground cover, moss cover, and incident solar radiation. These conditions will vary from site to site and were implemented with the intention of maintaining existing site and microsite conditions in accordance with the Management Recommendations for Survey and Manage Fungi (Castellano & O'Dell, 1997).
 - vi) Of the eight mollusk species identified for surveying within the Cascade Resource Area two were detected. The detections were made prior to implementation of the Pine Rock Project, and those species were subsequently dropped from the survey and manage requirement by the FSEIS “for amendment to the Survey & Manage, Protection Buffer, and other Mitigation Measures Standards and Guidelines”

(November, 2000). No other survey and manage mollusk species were detected, therefore, no mitigation is required.

vii) Red Tree Vole surveys were completed in 1999 and 2000 on the proposed project based on established protocol. Approximately 17 potential nests were identified. Subsequent climbing of all 17 trees revealed that none were red tree vole nests (active or inactive). Of the 17, 9 were determined to be bird nests, one a squirrel nest and the rest were collections of debris. No mitigation is required.

viii) Red-tailed hawk: The season restriction area around the red-tailed hawk has been adjusted to a more definable boundary. See Map.

3. Changes to the Environmental Consequences

a. Soils and Water

- i) Cable Yarding: Reducing the number of cable yarded acres from 162 in the EA to 131 in the timber sale contract would reduce non-mitigated compaction and loss of productivity on the proposed sale area proportionally.
- ii) Ground Based Yarding: Reducing the number of ground based yarded acres from 96 in the EA to 89 in the timber sale contract would reduce non-mitigated compaction and loss of productivity on the proposed sale area proportionally.
- iii) Helicopter Yarding: Increasing the number of acres from the EA, 81 to 88 in the contract would not result in any change since the helicopter yarding was expected to result in minimal erosion, ravel and compaction.
- iv) Roads: Short term increases in sediment produced as a result of culvert installation, replacement and repair could occur, but would not be likely since all work would be done during the dry season.
- v) Water Quality: No change in water quality or riparian shade would be anticipated under the listed modifications.
- vi) Cumulative Impacts: Cumulative impacts would be lower under this modification than originally analyzed in the EA. When compared to the EA, changes in Water Available For Runoff (WAR), and Equivalent Clearcut Acreage (ECA) would be reduced proportional to the reduction in acres.

III. DECISION

Based on site-specific analysis in the Environmental Assessment, the supporting project record, management recommendations contained in the Watershed Analysis (Molalla River) dated May, 1999, as well as the management direction contained in the RMP (*Salem District Resource Management Plan*), dated May, 1995, I have decided to implement Alternative A as described in the Pine Rock Timber Harvest and Riparian Restoration Plan Environmental Assessment (EA # OR080-99-04) (EA pp. 6-22, with the modifications in Section II -1 and 2, above, hereafter referred to as the “selected action ” (see attached map). Management Activities by Harvest Method are shown in Appendix A.

The following is a summary of this decision.

1. Harvest approximately 299 acres from GFMA and Riparian Reserve Land Use Allocations for an expected yield of 9551 hundred cubic feet (CCF) (5567 MBF). The following is a description of harvest acres and timber volumes by harvest method.
 - a. *Commercial thinning* (Partial Cut) of approximately 296 acres of Matrix lands from 10 units (Units 1, 2, 6,7, 11,12,13,14,15,16). It is expected that this will yield approximately 9378 hundred cubic feet (CCF).
 - b. *Riparian Reserve*: Individual tree selection thinning of approximately 3 acres within Riparian Reserve in units 1 and 7. It is expected that this will yield approximately 173 hundred cubic feet (CCF).²
2. Tree Topping: Approximately 600 trees would be topped within the project area for snag creation.
3. Road Maintenance and Renovation: Road maintenance and renovation (brushing, blading, resurfacing, spot rocking, culvert installation, replacement and repair) would occur on approximately five miles of existing road. These activities would take place within the current road prism.
4. Road decommissioning: Approximately 400 feet of existing roads would be decommissioned under other future funding. Approximately 7056 feet of road to be constructed would be decommissioned after completion of logging operations. Decommissioned roads would be blocked. Another 3749 feet of road would be stormproofed and blocked after logging operations.

² Does not count toward Allowable Sale Quantity (ASQ)

5. Approximately 84 acres of the thinned acres would be under-burned to re-introduce fire on the landscape, maintain fire adaptive traits, remove potential fire hazard and provide ecological diversity with mosaic effects.
6. Compliance with Direction

The selected action is consistent with applicable land use plans, policies, and programs (EA, p. 3).

- a. Programmatic documents covering this proposal are the:
 - \$ *Record of Decision for Amendments to the Survey and Manage, Protection Buffer, and Other Mitigation Measures Standards and Guidelines (ROD, January, 2001)*
 - \$ *Salem District Resource Management Plan (May 1995),*
 - \$ *Record of Decision (ROD) for Amendments to Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management Planning Documents Within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl (April 1994), and the*
 - \$ *Western Oregon Program-Management of Competing Vegetation Record of Decision (August 1992).*All of these documents may be reviewed at the Cascades Resource Area office.
- b. Monitoring activities related to this sale will be done as described in Appendix J of the RMP (May, 1995).

IV. DECISION RATIONALE

Considering public comment, the content of the EA and supporting project record, the management recommendations contained in the Molalla River Watershed Analysis, and the management direction contained in the RMP, I have decided to implement the selected action as described above. My rationale for this decision follows:

The selected action addresses the identified purpose and need for action in that it will:

- a. Contribute to meeting the need for a sustainable supply of timber by making over 9,551 CCF available and managing these forest stands to provide a long-term sustainable supply of timber.
- b. Contribute to meeting the need for a healthy forest ecosystem by speeding the development of desirable ecosystem components that are currently lacking due to past management practices.
- c. Adequately protect the watershed while meeting other objectives.
- d. Not preclude the recovery of any listed species nor contribute to the need to list a species.

The thinning alternative A meets the purpose and need by supplying sustainable timber, leaving a forest that can continue to grow and develop desirable components for ecological health in the watershed. The thinning alternative was selected over the regeneration alternatives because thinning these stands now would leave several harvest options open for the future. The remaining trees would continue to grow at a fast rate. Thinning would improve the biodiversity of the stands with increased light to the shrub and herb forest layer and in the long term this alternative would produce more total timber yield. The alternative with more road construction was selected over the alternative with less road construction and more aerial logging because the road locations adequately protect the environment. The cost of the aerial logging for a thinning is costly and the alternative with more road construction and conventional logging systems results in a more economical return to the taxpayers.

The “No Action” alternative, and alternatives which were dropped from further consideration during the development of the proposed action would not satisfactorily fulfill the Purpose and Need for action, EA p. 1.

V. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT/ CONSULTATION/COORDINATION

1. Scoping

A description of the proposal was included in the Salem Bureau of Land Management *Project Update* which is mailed to more than 900 individuals and organizations four times each year. Letters were also sent to the Confederated Tribes of Grande Ronde; Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation of Oregon; six federal, State, county and local government organizations; two municipal water supply officers; five interested groups; three individuals and the Molalla River Watch.

2. Comment Period and Comments

The EA was mailed to approximately 21 agencies, individuals and organizations on May 26, 1999. A legal notice was placed in local newspapers soliciting public input on the action from June 1 to July 1, 1999. The comment period was extended to July 23, 1999 to facilitate access to the watershed analysis. Three comment letters were received:

- Canby Utility Board, methods of timber harvest affect on water quality.
- Molalla River Watch, Inc., water quality, fisheries, cumulative impacts roads, and riparian reserves.
- Brenna Bell, Oregon Natural Resources Council, Northwest Environmental Defense Council and others, expressed specific concerns.

Responses to these comments can be found in the *Response to Public Comments Received on the Pine Rock Timber Harvest and Riparian Restoration Plan* in Appendix B.

3. Consultation/Coordination

The Pine Rock timber sale was submitted for Formal Consultation with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service(USFWS) (as provided in Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16U.S.C. 1536 (a)(2) and (a)(4) as amended). Consultation was completed on September 29, 1998. As a result of consultation, the USFWS found that the sale would not likely jeopardize the continued existence of the spotted owl or result in the destruction or adverse modification of spotted owl critical habitat.

The Pine Rock timber sale was submitted for informal consultation with National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) in accordance with 50 CFR § 402.14 (b)(1). Consultation was completed on August 6, 1999. As a result of consultation, NMFS found that the sale is not likely to adversely affect UWR steelhead and UWR Chinook salmon and is not likely to result in the destruction or adverse modification of proposed critical habitat.

VI. CONCLUSION

I have determined that change to the Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI – May 1999) for the Pine Rock Timber Sale is not necessary for these reasons:

The existing EA for the Pine Rock Timber Sale, along with additional information contained in this document, fully covers the project. There are no significant new circumstances or facts relevant to environmental concerns and bearing on the modification to the proposed action or its impacts that were not addressed in the EA. The action is within the scope of the alternatives identified in the original EA, and the environmental impacts are within those described in the original EA and are less than or the same as those anticipated for the proposed action in that assessment.

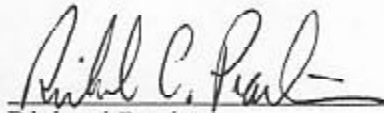
Protests

In accordance with Forest Management Regulations at 43 CFR 5003.2, the decision for this timber sale will not become effective or be open to formal protest until the Notice of Sale is published “in a newspaper of general circulation in the area where the lands affected by the decision are located”. Protests of this sale must be filed within 15 days of the first publication of the notice. For this project, the Notice of Sale will be published in the *Molalla Pioneer* on May 29, 2002. The planned sale date is June 26, 2002.

Contact Person

For additional information concerning this decision or the BLM protest process, contact Barbara Raible (503) 375-5687, Carolyn Sands (503) 315-5973 or Bob Hershey (503) 315-5931, Cascades Resource Area, Salem BLM, 1717 Fabry SE, Salem, Oregon 97306.

Approved by:



Richard Prather

Cascades Resource Area Field Manager

20 MAY 2002

Date

APPENDIX A: Unit Information and Project Design Features of the Selected Action by Harvest Method

Unit Information and Project Design Features of the Selected Action										
Unit Information	Unit 1 (9-A)	Unit 2 (9-G, H, J, 10-H)	Unit 6 (9-C)	Unit 7 (9-D, L, K, N, RR-8)	Unit 11 (9-I)	Unit 12 (10-F)	Unit 13 (10-G, E)	Unit 14 (10-C)	Unit 15 (10-A)	Unit16 (10-D)
Stand Age	80-120 years	70-110 years	70, 90	70-90	70, 90	110	70, 110	110	70, 110	80, 110
Dominant Species	Douglas-fir - dominant; minor components of grand fir, scattered Old Growth Douglas-fir, western hemlock and western redcedar									
Trees per acre prior to harvest	109	99	109	170	108	108	277	108	108	191
Estimated trees per acre after harvest	72	77	72	100	72	72	109	72	72	89
Harvest Method	Commercial thinning									
Unit Acres and Volume										
Harvest Acres	39	68	11	103	7	9	40	8	5	9
Cruised Volume (ccf - hundred cubic feet)	1024	2015	363	3366	331	256	1458	365	137	236
Cruised Volume (mbf - thousand board feet)	603	1288	212	1852	182	153	833	225	84	135

United States Department of the Interior
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
SALEM DISTRICT - OREGON

Timber Sale Contract Map
Contract No. OR080-TS2002-502

T. 7 S., R. 3 E., Sec. 8, 9, 10, 11, 16, W.M., Clackamas County

Pine Rock Harvest and
Riparian Enhancement
Project EA OR080-99-04

